

[34 cont.]

312
824 Concerning other water-containing trees, F. Seiner re-
ports:

"The water-containing trees always have two or more trunks, and the source of the water is to be sought up where the branches fork. If the saddle formed where the branches separate shows a hole, a hollow area is traced in the adjoining part of the trunk, which may contain up to 60 liters of water. The water is obtained by tying, Bushman fashion, a small bundle of dry grass, or better still, a handkerchief, to the tip of a stick and inserting it in the hollow. When the stick is drawn out, the water drips



Fig. 1. !Kung at a Bushman Well.

from the saturated bundle or cloth, which is pressed out over a cup. [Fig. 2 appears here.]

[35] "The most important water roots are the Asclepiadacea Fockea damarana Schltr. (ehoe), the Leguminosa

(532)
(224)



Fig. 2. //Gauab drives the game toward the hunters (from Kühn and Obermann, Buschmannkunst [Bushman Art]).

(113)

[48 cont.]

755 from ostrich egg shells, had been put on by her proxy, Dube, a
756 very intelligent young woman. The latter, standing at the end of
796 the semicircle of seated women, conducted the ceremony. She
[276] was in a very good mood and alternately smoked her Bushman
[554] pipe and my cigarettes. There is a kind of hierarchy among the
women; those who were squatting were higher in rank than those
who were standing. All the women clapped their hands and sang
in a monotonous rhythm: ehe, ehe, ehe, ehe, etc. This, I was
[533] assured, was no song, but "music." Some hordes have bartered



Fig. 19. Sorcerer in a Bird Mask, Followed by Spirits of Sick-
ness. (From Rock Paintings in South Africa. From Parts of the
Eastern Province and Orange Free State. Copied by G.W. Stow.
With an introduction and descriptive notes by Dorothea Bleek.
London, Methuen, 1930.)

[184] dance drums one and a half meters high from the Okavango,
which on this occasion are played by men. [Fig. 19 appears
here.] Among the Bushmen of the Sand Veld the female leader
of the ceremony does not wear the ornaments of the chief female
doctor; instead, the ornaments are hung on a tree. The position
of the chief female doctor is not permanently held by one person;
the chief doctor on occasion imparts supernatural powers to her.

755 The five doctors had taken off all their ornaments and
756 were naked except for the front apron. They put themselves
786 into an autohypnotic state by means of crowing, by producing
796

!KUNG

[54 cont.]

756 house. The doctor then begins to pray: "Lord, help us, the chil-
789 dren are dying, we are dying of thirst and hunger." He prays and
787 begs until the captain says: "It is good, I shall send water so that
796 the children will have water and veldkost." Then the great captain
again accompanies the doctor halfway down. As soon as the doctor
is down below, he lets go of the thread which is immediately drawn
up. Now the people dance and sing, for the rain has come:

(539) /gá-é dsó-jā /gaa
//ē gā djušā !kho ádshója /ga
//ē gā hin a /gaa /gaa
da //goá dshn !gu da adschóéa
χ u

We rejoice now over the rain.
Then we rejoice all together.
Then the rain comes.
Then the people praise the
lord.



Fig. 21. Spirits of the Dead and Rain Animal (from Bleek, Rock Paintings in South Africa etc., Pl. 58).

776 Another !Kung said to me: "The great captain in the sky
821 sends the rain and all that comes from above. If he does not want to,
everything remains shut up. The rain is opened up above; a great
vlei is there. I do not know the name of the great captain. The
Hei//om call him Som-seb."

17. Religion

771 After a critical look at the sum of the conceptions determining
177 the religious life of the !Kung, one recognizes, as would naturally
be expected in the case of such an ancient people, that the elements

[62]

Chapter 7

The Bushmen of the North

114 Our best information concerning the Masarwa comes from Dornan (1) and Holub (2). In what follows an outline sketch will

[113]

1. Dornan, Pygrines and Bushmen of the Kalahari, London, 1925.

2. Holub, Die Masarwa.

be given of the culture of this tribe, based upon these two authors.

342

(285) According to Dornan, the Masarwa once preferred to live in caves, where their ancestors had made paintings. The Bushmen in the Wankie and Ngami districts have plaited mats of grass or reed, with which they cover their windscreens. Sometimes they make a kind of roof covered with grass; otherwise they have ordinary windscreens.

• [532]
[172]



Fig. 21a. Representation of a Curing Scene. In the background, the female doctor who serves as oracle. (Eastern Cape Province. From J. P. Johnson, The Prehistoric Period in South Africa, 1910.)

[113]

322

411

For the wood of the bow the Masarwa use very straight little tree trunks. After the bark is removed, they are tied to a straight tree and left to dry. The wood is then given its final drying over the fire and is placed in water so that it will not splinter. The middle of the bow is also commonly wound with tendons. The bow is often greased and never unstrung. The finished bow is smoothed with a rough stone.

[63 cont.]

252 hot, the ashes and fire are taken out, the melons are placed in the hot soil, and the glowing ashes are thrown on them. The next morning the tsama are ready.

301 The largest ostrich egg beads are produced by the Masarwa.

532 Their dance masks are made with pods and cocoons, and
535 sometimes also small hide balls filled with little rattle stones.

323 They still know the art of pottery. White or red body painting is
302 customary.

304 A Bushman tribe at Ngami Lake is supposed to have the custom of removing the last joint of the little finger.

278 Dornan mentions the following medicines of the Masarwa: for black water fever, Anacampseros rhodesica; dysentery, Monsonia ovata and Euclea lanceolata. Other medicines: Cannabis sativa, Solanum nigrum, Lippia asperifolia, Crotalaria burkeana, Pterocarpus angolensis, Datura stramonium, Indigifera senegalensis, Bauhinia reticulata.

752 The Masarwa claim that they can only treat the bite of the puff adder. The body of the Lygosoma sundervalli is charred, and the powder is sprinkled into the wound. Every snake is killed, and
(751) its head crushed. Reportedly there are also inoculations against snakebite.

595 According to Dornan, monogamy prevails among the
836 Masarwa. Sexual intercourse before marriage is prohibited, and
684 incest and adultery are punishable by death. As a rule, the consent of the girl is necessary for marriage; it is generally sufficient if the suitor presents his father-in-law with a head of big game.

584 The hunting test is customary only among the Wankie Bushmen
582 and those of Bulalima. One may marry a girl from the same clan.

304 Among those tribes that are totemistically influenced, one may
681 not marry a person of the same totem. Circumcision is practiced.

As soon as the boys and girls are about 12 years old, circumcision takes place, for which a stone knife is used. In the case of the girls, the clitoris is pierced with a stone point. Sexual intercourse
(836) between the uncircumcised is strictly prohibited. Occasionally the nasal septum is pierced at the boys' initiation. As among the

761 Bantu, every death is explained as sorcery by human enemies. In

764 olden times the dead were supposedly thrown into the bush;

178 nowadays they are sometimes buried in a crouching position in

[69 cont.] I

524, have observed an analogous game among the Betschuana children
[171] in Epukiro.

The Elephant-Ostrich Game

Again a pile of sand serves as a substitute for a waterhole. Two boys come as elephants and want to drink. Two others imitate ostriches and will not let the elephants get water.

The Oxen Game

Three or four boys represent the oxen. One is regarded as the owner; another wants to steal them. After a little struggle, he gradually succeeds in doing so. Once he has stolen all of them, the game is over. (Compare the "ox stealing" among the Bergdama from Okombahe.) [Fig. 24 appears here.]



Fig. 24. Magical Contact between Hunters and Game (Salt River Valley, Kaofeld). From H. Obermaier and H. Kühn, Buschmannkunst [Bushman Art].

[232]

N/OW

LORNA MARSHALL

- 921 *N/ow*¹ is a belief concerning rain and cold which is held by the /Kung Bushmen in the region around Nyae Nyae in South West Africa.
- 132 About ten inches of rain falls in an average year in this part of the Kalahari Desert and sinks into the deep sands. There is no run-off in streams and there are few water holes. The rain is sufficient to support a covering vegetation of grass, shrubs, and scrubby trees. The vegetation includes numerous edible roots, tubers, leaves, fruits, and nuts, for which the Afrikaans language provides the convenient word *veldkos*.
- 105 The /Kung, the only inhabitants of the interior of this particular region, are nomadic hunters and gatherers. If the rains are poor and the veldkos dry and sparse, the people suffer. Rain, they say, is life-giving; sun is death-giving.
- 821 Summer is the season of the 'big rains' in the western Kalahari. 'Little rains'—a few scant showers—may fall in September, October, and November. The 'big rains' begin in late December or January and continue into March. The summer storms are awesome. Every day the winds drive monstrous clouds around the sky, which domes a horizon as flat as the sea. They breed the storms. Lightning streaks from them. Thunder roars and rumbles. The earth sucks in their deluges, hissing.
- 821 The /Kung say that thin clouds which give no rain are male. They call them */now*.² The big rain clouds are female. White ones they call *//ga kwi disi*—*//ga* means cloud or rain, *disi* means females.³ The enormous grey clouds with rain pouring from them the /Kung call */kwezi* (zebras), because they are so fleet and, though a person may think he is far from the rain, it comes swiftly and is on him. We have seen Bushmen, caught without shelter in the storms, shivering so that their teeth chattered, saying they could perish in such rain.
- [E37] Rain itself is male and female, */ga /go* and */ga di*. The men one day drew in the sand the spoor of male and female rain. Male rain spoor was made with all five fingers held stiffly and plunged deeply into the sand, to make big holes. Male rain breaks the trees and beats down the fruits, the men told us. It is (like) a fight, and may kill a person. Thunder and lightning accompany it, and sometimes hail. Female rain has tiny drops and does not spoil anything; it beautifies the trees and the grass and makes the veldkos grow. Its spoor was made by smoothing out a place in the sand and covering it closely with tiny dots. Gao said a person (anyone) may speak to the rain, saying, 'You are doing very well', or, 'Fall silently. Don't make such a noise. Don't be

¹ We wish to thank both Dr. Mary Douglas and Professor I. Schapera for reading the manuscript about *n/ow* and for making several helpful suggestions.

² The /Kung language has four clicks: / is the symbol for the dental click, ≠ for the alveolar, / for the alveolar palatal, and // for the lateral.

³ We did not know how to translate *kwi*, which occurs very often. It seemed sometimes to be a sort of article and we did not work on it especially. We

regret not having done so because Miss Bleek, in her *Bushman Dictionary* (American Oriental Society, New Haven, Connecticut, 1936), records in the Auen or //K'au-//en language, which she says is very like the /Kung and which she places south of the /Kung, the phrase */ga -k'wisi*, meaning rain's hair or cloud. In /Kung */ga* and *//ga* both mean rain. We now wonder if *kwi* should be *kwi* and if it means hair in the phrase *//ga kwi disi*.

for stretching carrying nets, and for pounding things. Informants said they had never seen or heard of stone arrow points or blades. They still use bone and wood points occasionally but have for the most part changed over to metal for knives, axes, assegai blades, and drills, as well as for arrow points.

From wood the men make bows and quivers as well as sticks for making fire, digging, carrying, and stirring; handles for knives, axes, and assegais; bowls, spoons, mortars, and pestles; and musical instruments—the five-stringed *guashi* and a one-stringed violin. Reed and bone are available in plenty for arrow shafts. There are abundant fiber and sinew for the excellent cordage that men and women make. Little tortoise shells are dippers and cosmetic boxes. Hides, although not abundant, are sufficient—in the Nyae Nyae region at least—for everyone to have a kaross, for the men to have breechcloths, and for the women to have modesty aprons and skins to wear around the buttocks. All have sewn skin bags. These objects of hide are made by men because they are products of the hunt. Frequently there are surplus hides for trade.

Ostrich egg shells are used for water containers, and women make ostrich egg shell beads. This is the one important craft of the women and the one for which Bushmen are noted among the surrounding peoples. Good ostrich egg shell bead ornaments are the most prized possessions of the !Kung. The women also make ornaments of European beads and of grass and thongs and tsf nuts. They very much enjoy ornamenting themselves.

The !Kung decorate their artifacts occasionally with rather meager scratched designs but have not developed graphic, pictorial, or sculptural arts to any appreciable extent.

The !Kung trade with their Tswana and Herero neighbors, offering well-tanned hides, ostrich egg shell beads, and a red powder they make from the dead heartwood of a certain tree. Usually what they want most of all in exchange is tobacco—for they are passionately addicted smokers—and malleable metal from which they shape their arrow points and assegai blades. They also want knives, axes, European beads, and either the round-bottomed Ovambo pots or European iron pots. Once in a while they get an old chisel or file, a basin or cup, or a few miserable scraps of cloth garments. The little Bushmen find the bigger, more aggressive Bantu hard bargainers and are rather at their mercy.

The significant thing about !Kung artifacts from a social point of view is that they are not accumulated as wealth and their possession does not symbolize high status or bestow prestige. It is not advantageous to multiply and accumulate in this society. Any man can make what he needs when he wants to. Most of the materials he uses are abundant and free for anyone to take. Furthermore, in their nomadic lives, without beasts of burden, the fact that the people themselves must carry everything puts a sharp limit

the members" (Murdock 1949:62 ff.). This definition very nearly fits the !Kung name relationship, but we are convinced that the !Kung do not think of the region as having a consciously structured grouping to which authority is attributed, such as, for example, a rule of endogamy. ⁵⁵³
⁶⁰²
¹²¹
²²⁹

- (8) Among consanguineous kin, ego is forbidden to marry siblings of parents, cousins (first, strictly; second, less strictly; and third, only theoretically), and nephews and nieces. Ego's marriage with great-grandparents, grandparents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren is also forbidden, but is not a concern. Discrepancy in age and the realization of close consanguinity combine to make the idea ridiculous and almost unthinkable. The affines whom ego must not marry are numerous, including spouses of offspring and parents of the spouse, also spouses of uncles and aunts. ⁵⁸²

Ego must not marry his sister's husband's father or brother's wife's mother, because, as marriages with the sister's husband and brother's wife are preferred, it seems improper to marry parents of one of these affines. Similarly, marriage with the husband's brother and wife's sister are preferred, so it seems logical to the !Kung to forbid marriage with the husband's brother's son or the wife's sister's daughter. Marriage with the parent of a son's wife or a daughter's husband is forbidden, for if ego married these affines that would make the son and son's wife or the daughter and daughter's husband step-brother and stepsister, which would be most awkward. Marriage with the wife's brother's wife or the husband's sister's husband is also forbidden; the reason for this lies in a complexity of the joking relationship.

Lastly, marriage is prohibited with certain name relatives whose names associate them with kinsmen to whom the incest taboo is extended. Ego is supposed not to marry anyone with the same name as his parent or offspring or anyone with the same name as his spouse's parent or offspring's spouse. He should not marry the parent or offspring or sibling of anyone with the same name as himself. ⁵⁸²
⁵⁵¹

- (9) When the people go to the mangetti forests after the rains have begun, the young girls draw on the soft, smooth, gray bark of female mangetti trees. They make diagrammatic representations of their genital aprons, of the bead ornaments that they wear in their hair and that are male and female symbols (the long rectangular ones are male, the triangular ones are female), and of the stripes of their leg scarifications. This suggests that the scarifications were associated directly with fertility, although now the women claim they are made only for beauty. ⁵³²
²⁰¹
³⁰⁴

Incidentally, the Nyae Nyae !Kung know nothing of the cave paintings or rock engravings that abound in other parts of southern Africa. We found none in the country around them. There were drawings, however, on baobab trees, abstract-looking forms different from the girls' drawings on the mangetti trees. ⁰⁰⁰

- (10) We believe that one of several possible adjustments might be made. Strictly speaking, a daughter does not become headman (though we heard people ⁶²²
⁶⁶²

BUSHMEN

37

Namib desert strip and adjacent districts in South-West Africa.¹ Their language is reported to be Nama, and they are sometimes said to be degenerate Hottentots who have lost their cattle and taken to a nomadic hunting and collecting life similar to that of the Bushmen. But the little we know about their customs and social organization shows that they are true Bushmen, although they have undoubtedly been considerably influenced in both culture and physical characters by the Hottentots. They were divided into several groups, each with its own distinctive name. The /geinin in the true Namib desert between Luderitz and Conception Bay, the //obanen in the region round the junction of the Great Fish and Orange Rivers, and the /koma of the Swartrand and Tiras plateaus have apparently disappeared completely; the /ganin in the region between Naauwkluft and Grootfontein S. are almost totally extinct, while the /huinin in the southern extremity of the Huib plateau just north of the Orange River are still represented by a few families. The numbers of the two last groups together are estimated at between 75 and 100. Hahn, writing of these people in 1879, says that they were then still painting on rocks.² This may be taken as convincing proof that they really are Bushmen, for the Hottentots do not practise this art at all. Their distribution, as well as the information we have about their habits and customs, seems to link them up with the Southern Group, but there is as yet no clear evidence in support of this view.

619

[197]

[162]

[532]

The above classification of the Bushmen into linguistic groups is quite independent of and distinct from considerations of race and culture. All Bushmen are of the same racial stock, and have fundamentally the same culture, just as their languages are essentially related. At the same time, there are variations in both race and culture running counter to the linguistic distinctions.

144

197

184

Broadly speaking, it may be said with regard to racial characters that the Bushmen living south of the Molopo River are purest in type. Those further north have all mixed to a varying extent principally with Bantu but also with Hottentots and Bergdama. In the west of this region there is perhaps more Hottentot blood, although in the north-west there has also been a good deal of intermixture with Bantu (chiefly OvaMbo) and Bergdama. In the east Bantu blood,

144

¹ L. Schultze, *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, 98-105; E. Seydel, "Aus der Namib," *D. KolBl.*, xxxi (1910), 501-6; P. Trenk, "Die Buschleute der Namib, ihre Familien- und Rechtsverhältnisse," *Mitt. deuts. Schutzgeb.*, xxiii (1910), 166-70; *idem*, "Aus der Namib," *Z. KolPol.*, xiii (1911), 301-8.

² T. Hahn, "Felszeichnungen der Buschmänner," *Verh. Berl. Ges. Anthropol.*, 1879, 307-8.

HUNTING

135

out by the hunter, who, however, keeps the skin, sinews, etc., for himself. 224

The Cape Bushmen occasionally dressed themselves up in the skin of an animal or in the feathers of an ostrich in order to approach the game unsuspected. A kind of saddle made of grass in which were stuck ostrich feathers was placed on the shoulders, while a long stick with the head curved to look like an ostrich was carried in the hand. The hunter by imitating the motions of the bird feeding, running or preening its feathers contrived to get as close to the flock as possible, always moving up wind, before discharging his poisoned arrow. In a well-known rock painting from Herschel reproduced by Stow¹ there is portrayed such a scene, in which the hunter is shown under the feathers of an ostrich, cautiously approaching, with poised arrow, a number of real ostriches who are feeding peacefully close by. Similar disguises are employed by the Namib Bushmen, but appear to be generally unknown among the tribes further north, although the ostrich disguise is reported by Dornan of the Hiechware and on hearsay by Kaufmann of the Auen. Various other ruses are known, however. Some men are very clever at imitating the calls of various birds and animals and by this means get quite close and thus secure their quarry. Again, "in the season when the young animals are not able to follow their dams, they are hidden by the mothers, who feed in the vicinity. The Bushmen having found where a young one is hidden, will go close up to it and imitate its cry. The mother, hearing the cry and thinking that some wild animal has attacked her calf, immediately rushes up to protect it, and is easily killed. Numbers of animals, more especially the smaller buck, are destroyed in this manner." 223 225 [292] [532] [184]

Almost every Bushman village has also a large number of dogs which accompany their masters on the hunt.² These are the only domestic animals possessed by the Bushmen. They are lean, hungry-looking mongrels, half-starved and savage-tempered. They are quite silent on the spoor and never betray the presence of the hunters by barking, though they will snarl and sometimes bark if one approaches an encampment. "It is really wonderful," says Herbst, "with what courage these lean mongrels will tackle a leopard, a courage no doubt begotten of hunger and an absolute confidence in their masters, who, with their knobkerries, are never far behind so 224 [237]

¹ Stow, op. cit., pl. vii, facing p. 81.

² Dornan, op. cit., 101; cf. Kaufmann, op. cit., 146.

³ Lichtenstein, *Travels in S. Africa*, ii, 262-3; Barrow, *Travels in S. Africa*, i, 271; Herbst, *Report on Rietfontein Area*, 6; Range, *Beiträge zur Landeskunde des Namalandes*, 73; Schultze, op. cit., 667; Dornan, op. cit., 103-4; D. F. Bleek, op. cit., 16.

DEATH AND BURIAL

163

year or two, during which the dead person is never spoken of but with veneration and tears.¹ 768

Several details in this account—the anointing, perfuming, and examination of the body, as well as the burning of the hut—are not met with in the descriptions of other independent observers, who as a rule remark merely that the corpse is buried with all its possessions and the place then deserted.² On the other hand, it is certain that many of the Southern Bushmen heaped stones on the graves of their dead. This custom may have originated merely from the desire to protect the body from the ravages of hyenas and other wild animals. It has, however, sometimes been given a religious significance owing to the fact, recorded by several of the older observers, that passing natives would always add a branch or a stone to the heap. It is unfortunately not always possible to gather whether the natives referred to were Bushmen or Hottentots. The latter certainly have various practices and beliefs connected with these grave heaps, of which the usage just mentioned is one of the most common, but there is no fully reliable evidence of anything similar being observed by the Southern Bushmen. [769] 114 764 769 171

In excavated graves the corpse is sometimes found lying on its left side, with one or two large flat stones placed directly upon it. The interest attaching to these "burial stones" lies in the fact that in a few cases, in association with cave burials along the south coast, they have been found with figures of human beings painted upon them in the typical Bushman style. It would be unprofitable to speculate upon the significance of such stones, as there is no record of any Bushmen having explained them to our authorities; but that they were related to some definite belief can hardly be doubted.³ 764 [532] ●

The Namib Bushmen, according to Seydel, as a rule bury a dead person on the morning following his death, and in any case not before the death has been confirmed by the nearest neighbours. The relatives of the dead man and the neighbours accompany the corpse to the grave, uttering or singing a funeral dirge. The grave [763]

¹ *Voyage d'Exploration au ... Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, 103-4.

² Campbell, *Missionary Travels in S. Africa*, 440; Barrow, *Travels in S. Africa*, i, 289; Fritsch, *Drei Jahre in Südafrika*, 242. The account given by Hahn (op. cit., 121) is obviously derived from Arbousset; that in Saw (op. cit., 126-9) from Arbousset, Campbell and Sperrman. The English translation of Arbousset (p. 161) renders "grossièrement parfumée" as "coarsely embalmed", which, as it is repeated in Saw, may have given rise to some misconception. There is nothing in the nature of real embalming among the Bushmen.

³ Fritsch, loc. cit.; Haughton, in *Trans. R. Soc. S. Afr.*, xiii, 105-6; FitzSimons, *S. Afr. J. Sci.*, xz, 301, 341.

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

179

can, in order that the rain should extend as far as possible. Among the many rock-paintings left by the Bushmen in the caves and rock-shelters of their country there are pictures "of wonderful animals, such as certainly never existed; these the Bushmen of fifty years ago explained as Rain bulls, Rain animals. With them are often seen frogs, fish, tortoise, and snake, the animals protected by the Rain".¹ Certain snakes found near a waterhole are believed to be kept in store by the Rain, and for fear of arousing its wrath may not be eaten by young unmarried men and women; nor may frogs be killed, lest drought ensue. When the Rain is angry with anyone, people may be carried off in a whirlwind, and various transformations effected. Young women are particularly exposed to danger from the Rain, and to avoid this they must observe various rules of conduct. They must propitiate the waterhole by means of *buchu* and *ito* (aromatic shrubs); they must hide themselves from the Rain; they must not snap their fingers at people, nor may they be spoken to against their wish, lest the anger of the Rain be thereby aroused. There are many legends telling how disobedient girls were punished, together with those around them, by the angry Rain, or were taken up by his agency in a whirlwind and transformed into frogs, snakes, porcupines, stars, water-flowers, etc. Such transformations are also illustrated in the rock-paintings. [821, 825, 532]

The Rain thus appears as something to be respected or feared, since it has power to change people into animals and other objects, as well as to destroy with storms and terrible lightning. At the same time it also brings water and makes food grow. In connection with this latter aspect Miss Bleek says: "That Bushmen realized the life-giving powers of water is clear, as all tales of rebirth are connected therewith. The Mantis restores his son and his sister, the Blue crane, to life after they have been killed by throwing a part of their body into the water. In course of time this part grows up into the person to which it had belonged. In the same way he makes an eland of a shoe (perhaps a piece of eland's skin). An ostrich is killed; one of its feathers blows into the water and becomes a new ostrich." [782, 821, 773, 825]

"Yet in spite of the Bushman's dependence on water and realization of its power," she goes on to say, "he does not represent it as a man or god. One instance is known to me of the Rain being addressed, when it is wrathful and lightens; but the first part of the speech is to the dead men who ride it:— [776]

¹ D. F. Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*, 308.

- 532 Perhaps the most remarkable feature in the whole culture of the
172 Bushmen was their pictorial art, consisting of paintings and engravings
[178] executed on rock surfaces (Plate XIII).¹ The practice of this art
has now almost completely died out, a necessary consequence of
the virtual extermination of the artists themselves. Its study now
belongs to the province of archaeology, for save in a few rare instances
it has proved impossible so far to find any living people who could
interpret the designs or throw any light upon the social aspects of
the art. The paintings and engravings remain as a very valuable
record of an art that now seems to be lost; but they have proved
a most important link in the chain of evidence connecting the Bushmen
with the prehistoric cultures not only of South Africa but of East
and North Africa also, as well as of South-Western Europe.²

Their distribution in South Africa extends from the Brandberg Mountains in South-West Africa to the upper reaches of the Tugela River in Natal, from the Humansdorp district on the south coast right up to the Zambesi River in the north. They are found especially over the greater part of the Cape, Griqualand West, Basutoland, Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Southern Rhodesia, but occur also in parts of South-West Africa, British Bechuanaland, and Natal. This distribution no longer coincides with that of the Bushmen themselves. It is impossible therefore to say whether all the tribes possessed the artistic talent or not. The Bushmen south of the Molopo River certainly painted down to a very recent date, and so did certain of the Namib groups.³ The rocks in the north-west may be evidence that the ancestors of the Auen and the Kung also did so, but the present people certainly do not, and have not even any traditions relating to the art.⁴ In the Kalahari itself, where most of the surviving Bushmen now live, the absence of suitable rock material precludes the practice of the art. It is perhaps no wonder, therefore, that the tribes found there have not the faintest recollections of it. Dornan, however, states that the Bushmen living along the Sansokwe River, in the extreme Eastern Kalahari, were still painting a few years ago.⁵

¹ The literature on this aspect of Bushman culture is voluminous. The most useful general works are: Tongue, *Bushman Paintings*, 1909; Moszeik, *Die Malereien der Buschmänner*, 1910; Zeličko, *Felsgravierungen der südafrikanischen Buschmänner*, 1921; Burkitt, *South Africa's Past in Stone and Paint*, 1928, chaps. vii-ix, and bibliography.

² Cf. Schapera, "Some Stylistic Affinities of Bushman Art," *S. Afr. J. Sci.*, xxii (1925), 504-15; Burkitt, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

³ The evidence is discussed by Moszeik, *op. cit.*, 10-11; cf. Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, p. xiv; Hahn, "Felszeichnungen der Buschmänner," *Verh. Berl. Ges. Anthropol.*, 1879, 306-7.

⁴ D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 41.

⁵ *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 123, 122-3.

DECORATIVE AND PICTORIAL ART 209

The paintings are most frequently found on the walls of caves and rock shelters, occasionally on isolated rocks out in the open, and in a few rare instances, as we have seen, on small loose slabs of stone associated with cave burials. The engravings, on the other hand, occur as a rule on outstanding or outlying patches of rock out in the open. The mode of occurrence of these two forms of the art seems to have been determined by the nature of the rock surface available. Where the stone was soft or porous and provided large plane surfaces, paintings were generally made; where it was hard, and there was little prospect of the paints taking a good hold, engraving prevailed. This also explains to some extent why paintings are mostly found in the caves and rock shelters produced by the effects of erosion on the relatively soft shales or sandstones, while engravings are seen on the exposed surfaces of such hard rocks as quartzite, diorite, basalt, diabase, and phyllite.

The technical processes employed in the execution of the designs appear to have been fairly simple. As canvas the rock surface in its natural state was employed; broad plane surfaces were preferred, but where these were not at hand no trouble seems to have been taken either to polish the rough surface of the rock or to level it down in any way.

The only implements used in making the engravings were small pieces of hard stone with a fairly serviceable point. With these the artist would laboriously chip away at the rock surface until his design was completed. Some of the engravings consist of only an outline drawing produced by more or less rough pointing and punching, giving the design an appearance known as "pocked". The pocking is usually very shallow, but in some of the figures a comparatively deep groove has been made. Sometimes the outline is completely filled, so that the engraving consists in a design uniformly pocked over the surface. One also finds a continuous grooved outline combined with a shallow pocked body, and in the best specimens the rock surface surrounding the design has been chipped away, leaving a sort of bas-relief in which shading is often skilfully introduced. Some of the engravings in this style are very beautifully done, and it is indeed astonishing to what a degree of excellence the artists could attain, considering the material disadvantages under which they worked.

The paintings are on the whole superior to and more elaborate than the engravings, and offered more scope for freedom of expression.

172
532
[386] Several different colours were used, the most common being red, black, yellow, white, and brown. These were derived chiefly from mineral ores—red and brown from hematite, yellow from iron pyrites, white from zinc oxide, while black was obtained from burned wood. The mineral ores were carefully ground down or pounded to a powder, which was then mixed with bone-marrow or animal fat. The outline of the design was first drawn with a burned stick, and the paint, after being moistened with water or saliva, was then smeared on by means of a feather brush or specially prepared tendons.

Various technical styles are also observable in the paintings, chiefly as regards the use of colour. Paintings in which only the outline of the design is coloured are reported from Southern Rhodesia, but are not known elsewhere. As a rule the whole design is filled in with colour, although sometimes the outline is coloured differently from the body. The design is often coloured a uniform monochrome, so as to present, as it were, a silhouette of the object depicted, with no apparent trace of shading. Other designs are in polychrome. Sometimes the colours are sharply separated and seem to have been used to demarcate the various features of the object represented. Thus in the case of the eland we frequently find the horns and hoofs coloured black, the head and back in ochre, while the neck, belly, and legs are in white. In other cases the colours are skilfully blended into one another, producing the effect of modelling. The best specimens of the art are all in this style. It seems, nevertheless, that in the cruder forms at least the artist laid more stress upon the drawing itself than on the colouring. We often find, for instance, that the various limbs of an animal are in different colours, and examples are known where a leopard or lion has been painted a deep red, which cannot be put down to the absence of the natural colour, as in the same scene there are other designs coloured yellow.

The recent investigations of Burkitt have shown that the paintings and engravings are not all of the same age, but that a chronological sequence can be seen in style and technique. Moreover, different styles of art occur in different geographical areas, and these different styles are sometimes found associated with different stone implement industries. Burkitt was able to demarcate three such regional groups of art—the Southern Rhodesia group; the Central group, occurring 172
184 in the central districts of the Union of South Africa north and west
532 of the great escarpment bounding the interior plateau; and the Southern group, found chiefly south and east of the mountain

DECORATIVE AND PICTORIAL ART 211

systems.¹ This grouping appears to have been formulated by him without taking into consideration the numerous specimens of the art found in the south-west Cape, and in South-West Africa, and can therefore scarcely be regarded as definitive, but it provides a most useful basis for the archaeological study of the paintings and engravings. 172
532 ●
184
[114]

In Southern Rhodesia, according to him, there are three distinct series of paintings, which when found in superposition always occur in the same order. The oldest series are usually coloured a uniform flat red or yellow, occasionally found in outline only, and the figures are "nicely drawn". Certain paintings in a dark brownish-red are slightly more modern, and the style perhaps more developed, but they belong to the same series. The middle series are all in dark claret, and quite different from anything before, not only in colour, but also in style. There is a certain angularity about the figures; the paintings have clean, sharp outlines; the curves and angles of horns and bodies are well and finely drawn, and the style is vigorous and attractive. Finally we get paintings in earthy yellow, white, and the beginnings of polychrome. The style of art is quite different again and much less attractive, the animal figures heavier, the bodies less shapely, and the legs stiffer.

In the Central group the paintings are much more varied, and seem more modern than those in Southern Rhodesia. They are distinguished by wonderful developments of polychrome and the frequent occurrence of elaborate scenes of battles, dances, etc., such as are not found in Southern Rhodesia. Superposition is of much less importance, but it was noted that wherever paintings comparable in colour and style to the 'dark claret' series of Rhodesia occurred in superposition with any other colours or styles they were always undermost and therefore oldest. The rock engravings, which are most frequently met with in the central districts of the Orange Free State and the adjoining northern parts of the Cape lying immediately to the west, also belong to this art group. Its distribution coincides with that of the Upper Smithfield Industry of the Later South African Stone Culture, and the paintings and engravings are always found associated with implements of this Industry.

The Southern art group, again, is invariably associated with the Wilton Industry of the Later South African Stone Culture, which, like the Upper Smithfield Industry, is definitely of Bushman origin. The paintings are here totally dissimilar from and far inferior to those

¹ Op. cit., 116-19.

172. of the preceding group. There are no polychromes. The figures
 184 for the most part are executed in a uniform bright red, almost
 532 vermillion, colour, and the rock background is also frequently
 reddened and smudgy as well. The animals are poorly drawn,
 the figures of human beings often large and angular, and the human
 hand is represented again and again, a feature never found in the
 Central group and not noted in Southern Rhodesia.

172 The objects depicted in these paintings and engravings are for the
 532 most part animals and human beings, though inanimate objects
 also figure occasionally, such as weapons, clothes, shields, trees,
 etc. Representations of animals hunted as big game—elephant,
 rhinoceros, hippopotamus, many varieties of antelope, especially
 the wildebeest and eland, lion, ostrich, and others—all figure very
 prominently, either singly or in groups. The fidelity with which
 they are often drawn testifies not only to the Bushman's skill as an
 artist, but also to his intimate familiarity with and acute observation
 of the habits and peculiarities of the animals upon which he depended
 for his subsistence. Exceedingly interesting are the bigger group
 scenes. Domestic occupations, hunting scenes, cattle raids, tribal
 fights, dances, even incidents in mythology, all are represented here
 in the most realistic manner and with a wealth of action. These
 pictures of scenes and events in Bushman life history, painted by the
 native artists upon the walls of the caves and rock shelters which
 they so often inhabited, are invaluable as a record of the conditions
 under which the old Bushmen lived, and they both illustrate and
 supplement the descriptions given of these people by outside observers.

The paintings and engravings in general are remarkable not only
 for their realism, for the fidelity and accuracy with which many
 of the animal forms are depicted, but also for a freedom from the
 limitations to delineation in profile characterizing for the most part
 the drawings of primitive peoples.¹ The aspect usually shown
 is the profile view, readily explained by the fact that this is the most
 striking as well as most complete single aspect of quadrupeds, and
 also happens to be the view that can most easily be represented on a
 plane surface. There are no drawings in absolute profile; the four
 legs are always shown, the animal usually being either in motion
 or in some attitude where this view is possible. Attitudes of a kind

¹ An excellent critical appreciation of Bushman art is given by Roger Fry, "Bushman Paintings," *Burlington Magazine*, 1910, 333-8; cf. Balfour, Preface (pp. 3-10) to Tongue, *Bushman Paintings*.

DECORATIVE AND PICTORIAL ART 213

difficult to render were entered upon without hesitation, such as a kudu lying down or an eland turning its head round towards its back, and occasionally even an appreciation of the rudiments of perspective is to be noted, though only in a crude and uncertain form. The human figures are not so restricted to the profile aspect, but lack the accuracy and realism of the animal drawings. There seems to be a tendency here to impressionism, to seize on certain features of the body and to emphasize or exaggerate these, while others are minimized or ignored, and just sufficient is shown to indicate what the subject is. Often a man will appear all arms and legs and practically nothing else, while in women steatopygia is usually by far the most pronounced detail.

In addition to single figures and such compositions as a hunter pursuing game or several animals grouped together, there are the interesting series of big group scenes—of cattle drives, dances, and battles—to show very well indeed how the principle underlying Bushman art was fundamentally realism. There is nothing truly schematic in a Bushman drawing. In a battle scene, for instance, it is difficult to pick out the warriors of the two sides; they are all mixed up confusedly, some charging, others flying, and here and there single combats go on at a distance from the main battle. More than this, the men are shown in every conceivable attitude—running, standing, kneeling, crouching, or turning sharply round in the middle of flight to face the enemy once more. "In fact," says Fry, "we have, in all its confusion, all its indeterminate variety and accident, a rough silhouette of the actual appearance of such a scene as viewed from above, for the Bushman makes this sacrifice of actual appearance to lucidity of statement—that he represents the figures as spread out over the ground, and not as seen one behind the other."

In the art as a whole therefore we find a definite attempt to portray objects and scenes as they actually appear at the moment, and not as what they may be conceived as ideally. The aspects selected are always represented faithfully, and the pictures in general emphasize the unity of the representations rather than their details. Conventionalization in any shape is rare, and possibly the only departure from realism is in the case of human beings, where there is the tendency to impressionism.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930

FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

PLATE XIII

172
532



Painted Panel at Nswaguti, Maropos



Paintings at Domboshawa, near Salisbury
BUSHMAN PAINTINGS IN S. RHODESIA

M. C. Burkhitt